

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method of gripping and centering a food item in a toasting compartment of a toaster comprising the steps of:

5 a) inserting the food item onto a carriage that is positioned in a receiving position within the toasting compartment;

 b) urging the carriage toward a toasting position; and

 c) depositing the food item onto a food cage such that gravitational forces exerted by the food item urge the food cage to grip and center the food item within the
10 toasting compartment.

2. The method of gripping and centering a food item in a toasting compartment of a toaster of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

 a) urging the carriage toward the food item at a conclusion of a toasting cycle to return the food item to the receiving position.

15 3. The method of gripping and centering a food item in a toasting compartment of a toaster of claim 1 wherein at the conclusion of step (c) the carriage is positioned adjacent a base of the toaster, which initiates a heater to energize and heat the food item during a predetermined toasting cycle.